

# Brethren Evangelist

"I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life."—Jesus

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## Editorial

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### The Hall of Fame

Thirty of our most distinguished Americans of the past have been voted places in the Hall of Fame, recently established by some wealthy persons in New York City. Two years from now twenty more will be selected. That will make fifty. A limited number, truly, yet constituting a group inferior to none that any other age or nation can exhibit. The world has never seen greater men, or better men in their way, than our Washington, our Lincoln, our Webster, our Franklin, our Longfellow, our Beecher, our Peabody, and many others selected by the senate of college presidents for enrollment among the immortals. But it is their character, their labors, their services, their exploits which lie at the basis of an immortality more enduring than the marble Hall of Fame. Marble halls have a way of tumbling down, and passing into forgetfulness. Archeologists and antiquarians are now digging up the long buried remains of temples of fame, where mighty nations, now forgotten, deposited the immortality of their full-blown heroes, also forgotten. Pharaohs as mighty as Caesar now repose in the mummy cases of modern museums, the focus of vulgar curiosity. What becomes of the dignity of puissant emperors, mighty conquerors, resplendent kings, when for a fee of twenty-five cents, or for nothing, a rustic can gaze upon their blackened and shriveled features behind a glass case.

A thousand years hence, two thousand, or ten thousand, and our Hall of Fame may only serve to point the jests of a rabble who will not know the difference between Abraham Lincoln and Adam the first. Some fellow's pick will dig up the statue of George Washington, and the learned world will speculate whether he was the founder of a nation or the manager of a laundry. As things go in this world, ten thousand years are sufficient to blot out all the difference between fame and forgetfulness. Statues, pantheons, temples of fame, are essentially a pagan

idea. They are the feeble attempts of men to escape the oblivion which heaven has decreed against everything pertaining to this world. Immortality pertains to the world to come, not to this. Will we carry into that world the memory of the tragedies, the iniquities of this? In the vivid clearness of intellectual vision, the superlative sensibilities, which will mark the celestial life, will not the recollection of the world, if such recollection exists, be as painful as the realities which now oppress us? Shall we travel this sorrowful pilgrimage over and over again in reminiscence? It is better to look upon the kindly old earth as the tomb of all her own sorrows and imperfections. On this side of that tomb is written the word, *Oblivion*. On the farther side is written the word, *Life*. There can be no immortality in the realm of death. The immortality of well doing will be written in the kind of character which well doing signifies and creates. A gentle hand and a welcoming smile will usher into that world of wonders, and the first glad moment of conscious existence there will reveal to us and in us all the rich fruitage of chastening and sorrow forgotten. The sinister shadow of this world will not be projected into the next to dim its eternal glory.

But it is well to emphasize the splendid virtues of the great and good, that the rising youth may be stimulated, by distinguished example, to high endeavor. To excel in great deeds, to perform great services to mankind, to add to the sum of human knowledge or human happiness, to help conquer some overshadowing social evil, to rescue multitudes from some pit of despair and destruction, these are sublime motives which by the illustration of some great example should be constantly presented to the aspirations of youthful talent. The ideals of this generation are more than ever inclined to be material and sordid. A vulgar fame proclaims in strident notes the millionaire, the mere money hoarder. Let us freshly kindle the lamps of honor and virtue, of noble unselfishness, of high purpose, and hold them aloft, that in their pure light the rising youth of our land may discern the road that leads to glory, and honor and immortality.